DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 323 000 PS 018 998

AUTHOR Hale, Janice E.
TITLE Visions for Children: African American Early Childhood Education Program. Phase Three Evaluation.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 12p.; For evaluations of phases 1 and 2, see ED 303 269.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Black Education; *Black Youth; Comparative Analysis; Curriculum Development; Demonstration Programs; Identification (Psychology); *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; *Racial Identification
IDENTIFIERS African Americans; *Visions for Children

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the third year of a longitudinal evaluation of the Visions for Children preschool program. An early childhood education demonstration program, the Visions program aims to facilitate the intellectual development and academic achievement of African American preschool children while strengthening their self-esteem and identity as Afro-Americans. Children in the control group attended a high quality day care center with a highly trained staff. Evaluation data indicated that program participants scored higher than control group children on eight tests. In addition, program participants in the two cohorts of the Visions group scored higher than control subjects on subtests of the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test, taken before kindergarten entry, and the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), taken before entrance into the first grade. Visions program participants scored significantly higher on the visual recognition and vocabulary subtests of the SAT. It is noted that control group children had less of a Caucasian orientation than did program participants. This is surprising, because a major thrust of the program is its Afrocentric perspective. Explanations for this outcome are explored. (RH)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED323000

# Visions For Children
# African American Early Childhood Education Program
# Phase Three Evaluation

Janice E. Hale, Ph.D.
Professor
Early Childhood Education
Wayne State University

Short Form of Title:
Visions for Children
African American Preschool Program
Evaluation

Mailing Address: 3697 Concord Drive
Beachwood, Ohio 44122
216-831-6665

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Janice E. Hale

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PS 018998



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# VISIONS FOR CHILDREN
# AFRICAN AMERICAN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM
# PHASE THREE EVALUATION

This is a report of the third year longitudinal evaluation of an early childhood education demonstration program. Baseline data for the first two phases of child testing and the features of the program were described in detail in an earlier article. The goal of the program is to facilitate the intellectual development and academic achievement of African American preschool children.

Visions for Children is a preschool program which emphasizes the special characteristics of African-American children, offering a teaching method and curriculum which encourages children to learn the information and skills necessary for upward mobiity, career achievement and financial independence in the American mainstream. At the same time, they feel pride in their own ethnic culture and are able to identify with and contribute to the development of their people.

This program is based on the model described in Black Children: Their Roots, Culture and Learning Styles, (Hale-Benson, 1986). The research associated with the program is

funded by the Cleveland Foundation. A distinctive feature is the emphasis on teaching young children cognitive skills while strengthening their self-esteem and identity as Afro-Americans.

The teaching method emphasizes Afro-American culture and integrates it in all of its diversity throughout the curriculum. The children learn about Africa and their rich cultural heritage; they learn about Afro-American and African arts and crafts; they listen to folktales and stories written by Afro-American writers; they listen to music and learn about musicians that emerge from Black culture; they learn about heroes in Black history such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In sum, the children in this program are surrounded with messages that get them started on the right track in realizing that there is pride in being beautiful Black children who can hold their own in a competitive society.

Visions for Children emphasizes the development of cognitive skills, such as reasoning, memory, problem-solving, creativity, and language skills. Progress is assessed using both teacher-made and standardized instruments. Even though standardized instruments can contain inherent biases toward minority children, a goal of this program is to de-mystify these tests for parents and to help the children perform well on such measures.

There is a strong correlation between language facility and performing well on standardized measures in the

professional work world. Therefore, Visions for Children's focus is on language skills. This includes expressive as well as receptive language. Too often children receive language through listening, but do not have enough opportunities to engage in expressive language. Expressive language includes holding conversations with adults, telling stories from pictures, engaging in socio-dramatic play, and responding to questions in complete sentences.

Curriculum Development

An important outcome of this project is the curriculum that has been written to document the planning for increasing the intellectual gains in the children. The curriculum is being edited for publication. This is a quality early childhood curriculum that is specifically geared to meet the needs of African American children.

Another feature of the curriculum is that it is being used by teachers who are at the entry level of early childhood education/child care careers. Certainly each teacher must be trained in early childhood education so that each area is taught properly. However, a feature of the curriculum is that it provides a comprehensive panorama of the components of a quality early childhood education. The support of a comprehensive curriculum may be important for a teacher with minimum training who might have difficulty structuring the day on her own to include all of the things we want young children to know and do.

This curriculum has an early-to-follow format that can be easily adjusted by individual programs according to the areas of the curriculum they wish to emphasize. The curriculum can also be adjusted to accommodate more or less teachers, larger or smaller groups of children, one room or multiple rooms, short or longer days.

Described elsewhere (Hale-Benson, 1990) is the organization of the curriculum, planning forms, the schedule, and field trips. A parent curriculum has been developed that is designed for the parent to engage in a fifteen minute activity each weekday in one of three of the curricular areas: Literacy, Mathematics and African American studies. The activities parallel the center curricular activities and are designed to apprise the parents of the skills the children are working on in the center and to help them reinforce those skills.

Also reported in the previous article (Hale-Benson, 1990) is a description of the control group which is a day care center in Cleveland, Ohio. A comparison is made between the control group program and the child characteristics. The design of the longitudinal evaluation of the project is given as well as the method of measurement selection. The research questions of the study are delineated and the measures are listed and described.

The purpose of this article is to provide a summary of the data gathered during Phase 3 testing.

## SUMMARY OF DATA ANALYSIS

A summary of the measures administered during Phase 3 reveals that the Visions children scored higher on eight tests. (See Table 1) The control group scored higher on three and there was a nonsignificant difference on four. In the Phase 2 round of testing, the Visions children scored higher on zero tests, the control group scored higher on two and there was a nonsignificant difference on fifteen. The Visions children performed considerably better during the Phase 3 testing.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Place Table 1 about here

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

A surprising finding was that even though both groups of children indicated an outgroup orientation on the racial attitudes measure, the control group children scored less of a Caucasian orientation than the Visions children. This is surprising because a major thrust of the Visions program is an Afrocentric perspective.

A conversation with Dr. Harriette McAdoo (Howard University) revealed that African American preschool children tend to score similarly to white children until they are about eight years old. Her data reveal that differences made by educational programs on raciala attitudes emerge at that

age.

We also discussed the possibility that children who score higher on cognitive abilities measures may be more astute at reflecting the attitudes of the general society and more direct instruction is needed to counteract the messages of the media.

Visions for Children has attempted to provide an integrated subtle approach to incorporating African American culture in the curriculum. We discussed the fact that it is difficult to counteract Eurocentric cultural overtones with a subtle presentation.

As a result of these data, steps were taking in the subsequent program year to engage the children in more direct activities that are designed to create an ingroup orientation such as mealtime chants and pledges.

The Visions program moved to a new location between phases 2 and three so there was a significant change in the enrollment of children. Therefore, it was not possible to compute gains scores from one year to the next for a large enough group of children.

**Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test**

The Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test is given to the children in both groups before they enter kindergarten. Reported below are scores for the 1st and 2nd cohorts on that measure. (See Table 2).

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Place Table 2 about here

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Even though there was no significant difference in the scores of the two groups on all subtests, the two cohorts of Visions children scored higher on 16 out of 22 tests than the children in the control group.

Stanford Achievement Test

The Stanford Achievement Test is given to the children in both groups before they enter first grade and at the end of each subsequent year of school. Reported below are scores for the 1st cohorts on that measure. (See Table 3).

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Place Table 3 about here

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

There are three basic content areas in this test: Reading, Language, and Mathematics. There are six separate tests. They are: visual recognition, sound recognition, vocabulary, comprehension, language expression, and mathematics concepts and applications.

The Visions children scored significantly higher on visual recognition and vocabulary. Even though there was not a significant difference on the remaining four tests, the

Visions children consistently scored higher on all except language expression.

The graduates of both programs will be tested as long as the project is funded to determine whether they sustain the gains made through attending a quality preschool program.

The control group was selected because it is a quality early childhood education center. The control group program has been in operation for 19 years. The staff in the control group also has a higher level of training than the Visions staff. Therefore, the fact that the Visions scored higher than the control group on over half of the tests administered is a good beginning.

## REFERENCE

Hale-Benson, Janice E. (1986). Black children: Their roots, culture and learning styles. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University.

Hale-Benson, Janice E. (1990). Visions for children: African-American preschool program in Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 5, 199-213.

Table 1
All Measures Except Metropolitan
and California

| | Visions | Non-Sign. | Euclid |
|---|---|---|---|
| McCarthy | | | |
| Verbal | | x | |
| Perception | x | | |
| Quantitative | x | | |
| General Cognitive | x | | |
| Memory | x | | |
| Motor | x | | |
| Delay of Gratification | | | x |
| Self-Concept | | | |
| Own cogn. abilities | x | | |
| Own opin. of peer approval | | x | |
| Own opin. of phys. abilities | | x | |
| Percept. of Maternal acceptance | | x | |
| T's assess. of ch's cogn. abilities | | | x |
| T's assess. of peer acceptance | | | x |
| T's assess. of phys. abilities | x | | |
| Child Behavior Average | x | | |
| Racial Attitude | | | x |
| Total # | 8 | 4 | 3 |

Table 2
Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test

| | Visions | Non-Sign. | Euclid |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Cohort | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| 2nd Cohort | 0 | 6 | 0 |

Table 3
Stanford Achievement Test

| | Visions | Non-Sign. | Euclid |
|---|---|---|---|
| All Scores | 2 | 4 | 0 |